programme supports wide range of approaches, options and strategies. This *inter alia* includes open learning system and open schools, alternative schooling, distance education and learning, special schools wherever necessary, home based education, itinerant teacher model, remedial teaching, part time classes, community based rehabilitation (CBR) and vocational education.

(ii) The integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) Scheme promotes integrated education in schools by providing 100% financial assistance for creation of appropriate infrastructure, educational material and training to general school teachers to meet the requirement of children with special needs.

(iii) Under the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS), financial assistance is provided to Non-Governmental Organizations for imparting education and life skills to children with disabilities in special schools.

Discrimination against persons with disabilities

2733. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that C&AG has pointed out discrimination against persons with disabilities in the area of education, employment, public transportation and access to public buildings and services in all walks of life;

(b) if so, the steps taken to check such discrimination; and

(c) the details of the programme implemented for treatment, rehabilitation, welfare and economic development of the persons with disabilites?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN):(a) and (d) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C&AG) had conducted

an audit review of the various programmes of the States/UTs and Central Ministries for the welfare of disabled persons during the year 1998-99 to 2002-03 and also implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995. The C&AG had submitted its Report No. 14 of 2004-Performance Appraisal in regard to Empowerment of the Disabled for the period ended on 31.3.2003, wherein it has highlighted deficiencies in planning and implementation of schemes/programmes meant for the welfare of persons with disabilities. The report of the C&AG has been sent to the State Government/UT Administrations and concerned Central Ministries/ Departments for taking remedial measures.

(c) Information is given in the Statement.

Statement

Details of programmes for the persons with disabilities

(1) Free treatment is provided to all persons including the children with disabilities in Government Hospitals.

(2) For rehabilitation, welfare and economic development of the persons with disabilities, the following schemes are under implementation:-

(a) Six National Institutes set up in each major area of disability work, towards manpower development through long term and short term training programmes, provide rehabilitation services, undertake functional research etc.

(b) The District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) provide assessment of need of assistive devices, provision/fitment/follow up/repair of assistive devices, therapeutical services, etc. These centres provide supportive and complementary services to promote education, vocational training and employment for persons with disabilities.

(c) Schemes are also under implementation for providing support to Non-Governmental Organizations running special schools and imparting vocational training to persons with disabilities.

(d) Under the ADIP scheme, Aids and Appliances are distributed

through implementing agencies like voluntary organizations, National Institutes under the Ministry, ALIMCO, Zila Panchayats, DRDAs, etc.

(e) The National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) provides financial assistance to persons with disabilities on soft terms for self-employment and income generating activities through State channelising agencies.

The details of these schemes are available on *www.socialjustice.nic.in.*

(f) The National Trust for Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities is providing financial support to families who are willing to look after the health and livelihood needs of destitute and abandoned children with severe mental and multiple disabilities. The details of the scheme are available on the website of the National Trust (www.nationaltrust.org.in)

Reduction in age limit for senior citizens

2734. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Parliamentary Committee on Petitions Rajya Sabha, in its report recommended to decrease the minimum age for senior citizen from 65 years to 60 years in order to give them facilities for a longer period and accordingly her Ministry had directed to the States to implement the said recommendation; and

(b) if so, the States which are implementing the above direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN):(a) Yes, Sir. The Parliamentary Committee on Petition in its 120th Report had recommended to decrease the minimum age for senior citizens from 65 years to 60 years. Accordingly, the Ministry has requested the concerned Ministries/Department, State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for reducing the age limit to 60 plus for conferring status of senior citizen